

BLUE GRASS BLADE

VOLUME XVIII A T Parker
High and Ashland East Side
Sep08

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY, SUNDAY, MAY 8th, 1910.

Number 21.

MARK TWAIN

America's Greatest Humorist, and one of Her Greatest Infidels

It is a matter of note that humor, the opposite of pety and sanctimonious, invariably tends to scepticism and freedom of thought. The humorist is quick to observe the ridiculous, and what upon the earth, above the earth or under the earth, so fantastic, ridiculous and silly as the mysterious parts of the Christian faith. A humorist, in time, couldn't help being an infidel if he tried. Lincoln, Artemus Ward, Josh Billings, Mark Twain and nearly all the rest took to scepticism as a duck takes to water.

It has been generally known for years that Mark Twain was not a Christian. Some of his most biting wit and ridicule has been spent on the preposterous claims of the Christian superstition, and upon the childish and foolish stories of the Bible.

Nevertheless, they took Mark to church when he died, and sung and prayed, and twaddled, and furnished an occasion for a good story from Mark, when he meets old friends in Aitch-e-double-ell.

However, the preachers are not breaking their necks claiming Mark just now, but if they can keep all knowledge of his infidelity out of the papers, they will claim him after while.

But this will not be likely for since his death it has come to light, that he wrote a book some years ago, against Christianity and had it secretly printed under an assumed name.

It would have been more to his credit to have come out in the open but Mark was a bankrupt at that time, and had to keep mum, besides he thought, that owing to his being a humorist, it would not be taken seriously.

It is safe to say that the book will now be republished under his own name, and will be the biggest seller of all his books.

Freethinkers of the country will anxiously await it, for in getting Mark one more bright star is added to our already glittering crown.

He seems to fear that it would be made a matter of laughter and ridicule, we know, so he had his publishers print 500 copies, and sent them around to people he wanted to have own them. The New York Tribune says he was "discouraged because the world always wanted to make a joke of whatever he wrote or spoke," so he took this method of putting his thoughts before them, in order that "if the identity of the author ever leaked out in his lifetime there would be nothing on which to establish proof." The book has an unsigned prefatory note which reads as follows:

"February, 1906. The studies for these papers were begun twenty-five or twenty-seven years ago. The papers were written seven years ago. I have examined them once or twice since and found them satisfactory. I have just examined them again, and am still satisfied they speak the truth.

"Every thought in them has been thought (and accepted as unassailable truth) by millions upon millions of men—and concealed, kept private. Why did they not speak out? Because they dreaded (and could not bear) the disapproval of the people around them. Why have I not published? The same reason has restrained me, I think. I can find no other."

The book, we are told, was written at odd times between 1880 and 1906. It sets forth in the form of a dialog between a Young Man and an Old Man "its author's notions of the inner springs of human character." Midway in this volume of 140 pages is a list of the principal religious faiths of the world. And upon this the Old Man remarks:

"That list of sects is not a record of studies, searching, seeking after light; it mainly (and sarcastically) indicates what association can do. If you know a man's nationality you can come within a split hair of guessing the complexion of his religion: English, Protestant; American, ditto; Spanish, Frechman, Irishman, Italian, South American, Austrian, Roman Catholic; Russian, Greek Catholic; Turk, Mohammedan, and so on. And when you know the man's religious complexion you know what sort of religious books he reads when he wants some light and what sort of books he avoids, lest by accident he get more light than he wants. In America if you know which party collar a voter wears you know what his associations are and how he came by his politics and

which breed of newspapers he reads to get light, and which breed he diligently avoids, and which breed of mass-meetings he attends in order to broaden his political knowledge, and which breed of mass-meeting he does not attend, except to refute its doctrines with brickbats. We are always hearing of people who are around seeking after truth. I have never seen a (permanent) specimen. I think he has never lived. But I have seen several entirely sincere people who thought they were (permanent) seekers after truth. They sought diligently, persistently, carefully, cautiously, profoundly, with perfect honesty and nicely adjusted judgment—until they believed that without doubt or question they had found the truth. That was the end of the search. The man spent the rest of his life hunting up shingles where-with to protect his truth from the weather. If he was seeking after political truth he found it in one or another of the hundred political gospels which govern men in the earth; if he was seeking after the only true religion he found it in one or another of the 3,000 that are in the market. In any case, when he found the truth he sought no farther; but from that day forth, with his soldering-iron in one hand and his bludgeon in the other, he tinkered its leaks and reasoned with objectors. There have been innumerable temporary seekers after truth—have you ever heard of a permanent one? In the very nature of man such a person is impossible. However, to drop back to the text—training; all training is one form or another of outside influence, and association is the largest part of it. A man is never anything but what his outside influences have made him. They train him downward or they train him upward—but they train him; they are at work upon him all the time."

At the close of the discussion between these two supposititious characters the Old Man observes: "Beliefs are acquisitions; temperaments are born. Beliefs are subject to change; nothing whatever can change temperament." But the Young Man objects that "extreme temperaments" have been instanced and the Old Man replies:

"Yes. The half-dozen others are modifications of the extremes. But the law is the same. Where the temperament is two-thirds unhappy, no political or religious beliefs can change the proportions. The vast majority of temperaments are pretty equally balanced; the intensities are absent, and this enables a nation to accommodate itself to its political and religious circumstances and like them, be satisfied with them, at last prefer them. Nations do not think, they only feel. They get their feelings at second-hand through their temperaments, not by brains. A nation can be brought—by force of circumstances, not argument—to reconcile itself to any kind of government or religion that can be devised; in time it will fit itself to the required conditions; later, it will prefer them, and will fiercely fight for them. As instances, you have all history: the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Russians, the Germans, the French, the English, the Spanish, the Americans, the South Americans, the Japanese, the Chinese, the Hindus, the Turks—a thousand wild and tame religions, every kind of government that can be thought of, from tiger to house-cat, each nation knowing that it has the only true religion and the only sane system of government, each despising all the others, each an ass and not suspecting it, each proud of its fancied supremacy, each perfectly sure it is the pet of God, each with undoubting confidence summoning him to take command in time of war, each surprised when he goes over to the enemy, but by habit able to excuse it and resume compliments—in a word, the whole human race content, always content, persistently content, indiscreetly content, happy, thankful, proud, no matter what its religion is, nor whether its master be tiger or house-cat, Am I stating facts? You know I am. Is the human race cheerful? You know it is. Considering what it can stand, and be happy, you do me too much honor when you think that I can place before it a system of plain cold facts that can take the cheerfulness out of it. Nothing can do that. Everything has been tried. Without

success. I beg you not to be troubled." J. B. W.

REV. KELLY WAS TRAPPED.

A Little Trip to Tulsa For a Good Time Brought an Evangelist to Grief.

Special to The Beacon.

Tulsa, Ok., May 2.—If the ministerial association of the Methodist church for eastern Oklahoma, had not held a meeting in Okmulgee yesterday, a man and a woman might have continued in their sin and avoided discovery.

As it happened, behind this simple entry on the police court blotter, there is a bitter story of unholty love, infidelity to family and treachery to the cloth.

J. K. Kelly. Etta DeWitt. Charge, immoral conduct. Arrested by Keith and Neal.

Rev. J. W. Kelly, whose name was written across the docket without a title, but who is well known as a traveling evangelist, claiming to be of the Methodist faith, deposited a cash bond of \$300 for the appearance of himself and the DeWitt woman in police court, this morning, but forfeited it by failing to appear.

Preachers Sized Him Up.

Kelly fell into a trap which has long been set for him, but which worked out unexpectedly last night. Returning from Okmulgee, where they had attended a meeting of the ministerial association, Reverends J. W. Baker and T. E. Sisson of the First Methodist church of Tulsa, observed the peculiar actions of a couple in the car in which they were riding.

The man Rev. Sisson recognized as Rev. Kelly, while the woman, though a stranger to the ministers, was decided to be some other than the evangelist's wife.

For years Kelly has been going through the country proclaiming himself to be a Methodist evangelist and preaching at the country churches. He is a polished talker, suave of manner and of an aggressive disposition. The country preachers, who were in the midst of "protracted" meetings found him a stirring speaker and indefatigable worker. But the city preachers had a line on Kelly that they were anxious to tighten.

Plans Laid to Catch Him.

At the Frisco passenger station, Kelly and the woman alighted. Unseen, they were shadowed by ministers, whose care it was to prove that Kelly was unworthy of the office to which he aspired and claimed.

It was but a few moments after midnight when Kelly and his paramour entered the Capitol hotel at First and Boston avenue. Several pairs of ecclesiastical eyes saw him go there and register inscribe this name:

"E. W. Travis and wife, Oklahoma City."

E. E. Keith, night captain of police, and Patrolman Neal were called immediately and the preacher and the woman were arrested in a room to which they had been assigned as man and wife.

Taken to Police Station.

Rev. Kelly and the DeWitt, were taken to the police station where cash bond was furnished for their appearance in the morning.

Rev. Kelly is married and has a family somewhere, the ministers declare, but they do not know where.

Rev. Kelly is about 50 years old

CHRISTIANITY AND WOMAN.

Christianity has not benefited the world in respect to the condition of woman, which is one of the best criteria of civilization. The ordinary Christian, seeing polygamy prevail beyond the borders of Christendom, and monogamy within them, imagines the difference is due to Christianity; and his clerical guides, who know better, confirm him in the delusion. Here again it is obvious that religion only consecrates the established social order. It sanctions polygamy in the East and monogamy in the West. Christianity found monogamy existing, and did not create it.

Had monogamy not prevailed before the triumph of Christianity, it is difficult to see in what way the new faith would have established it. There is not a word against polygamy, as a general custom, from Genesis to Revelation. Jehovah's favorites were all polygamists, neither did Christ command the marriage of one man with one woman. The Mormons justify polygamy from the Bible, and the United States government answers them, not by argument, but by penal legislation. Concubinage is also justified from the Bible. The more a man is steeped

in the Christian scriptures, his sexual and domestic views become the more patriarchal.

Christianity, indeed, has been woman's enemy, and not her friend. Christ's own teaching on sexual matters is much disputed. His language is very largely veiled and enigmatic, but it gives a strong plausibility to the opinion of Count Tolstoi, that sexual intercourse is always more or less sinful, and that no one who desires to be Christlike, can think of marrying. St. Paul's language is more precise. He plainly bids men and women to live single; only, if they cannot do so without fornication, he allows of marriage as a concession to the weakness of the flesh. Essentially, therefore, he places the union of men and women on the same ground as the coupling of beasts. Further, he orders wives to obey their husbands as absolutely as the Church obeys Christ; coating the pill with the nauseous reminder that the man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man.

Following Christ and Paul, as they understood them, the Christian fathers lauded virginity to the skies, emphasized woman's dependence on man, and treated her with every conceivable indignity. Their language is often too foul to transcribe. Let it suffice to say that they were intensely scriptural in thought and expression. Taking the story of the Fall as true, they regarded woman as the door or sin and damnation. Logically, also, they saw in the birth of Christ, from a virgin, a stigma on natural motherhood. Under the old Jewish law, every woman who brought forth the fruit of love was "unclean." This sentiment survived in the Christian Church. It was deepened by the miraculous birth of Christ, and strengthened by contact with the great oriental doctrine of the opposition between matter and spirit—a doctrine which lies at the root of all asceticism, and that is the key to the sexual morbidity of all the creeds.

These are debatable matters, and it is easy for Christian rhetoricians to find ways of escape by subtle methods of interpretation. The Bible becomes in their hands, a "nose of wax," as Erasmus said, to be twisted into any shape or direction. Plain matters of fact, however, are not so easily perverted; and an appeal to history will show that Christianity lowered, instead of raising, the whole status of women.

Principal Donaldson (and it is well to take a clerical authority) is the author of an important article in the Contemporary Review for September, 1889, on "The Position for Women among the Early Christians." It is very unflattering to Christian vanity, and it has been answered by silence. "It is a prevalent opinion," says Professor Donaldson, "that woman owes her present high position to Christianity, and the influences of the Teutonic mind. I used to believe this opinion, but in the first three centuries I have not been able to see that Christianity had any favorable effect on the position of women, but on the contrary, that it tended to lower their character and contract the range of their activity." He points out that at the dawn of Christianity woman had attained great freedom, power and influence in the Roman Empire. "They dined in the company of men," he says, "they studied literature and philosophy, they took part in political movements, they were allowed to defend their own law cases if they liked, and they helped their husbands in the government of provinces and the writing of books." All this was stopped by Christianity. "The highest post to which she arose in the Christian Church was to be a door keeper and a message-woman." A woman bold enough to teach was, in the eyes of Tertullian, "a wanton." The duties of a wife were simple—"She had to obey her husband, for he was her head, her lord, and superior; she was to fear him, reverence him, and please him alone; she had to cultivate silence; she had to spin and take care of the house, and she ought to stay at home and attend to her children."

Sir Henry Maine had previously observed, in his remarkable Ancient Law, that Christianity tended from the first, to narrow the rights and liberties of women. Not Roman jurisprudence, but the Canon Law, was responsible for the disabilities on married women that obtained in Europe down to the last century. The personal liberty conferred on married women by the middle Roman law, in Sir Henry Maine's opinion, was not likely to be restored to them by a society which preserved "any tincture of Christianity." Married women, however, in every civilized country are now rising into a position of legal independence; and this is but a revival of the best Roman law, which prevailed before the triumph of Christianity.—(G. W. Foote, in The Freethinker.

TOLERANCE

Toward Christian Science, Absent Treatment and Other Crazes

If we were asked to name what was, in our opinion, the most precious inheritance left by the Nineteenth Century to its successor, the Twentieth, we would unhesitatingly answer: Tolerance. The great discoveries and inventions of the Nineteenth Century—the steam-engine, the steamboat, the railroad, the telegraph, the telephone, electric light, etc.—have revolutionized the means of production and transportation, and have contributed in a most remarkable manner toward the intellectual development and material comfort of the human race. But the agency that will contribute more than anything else toward the arrival of the true millennium—by which we mean the era of peaceful and orderly development, when all useless and unnecessary strife will be a half-forgotten memory—is Tolerance.

Those who have not made a study of the history of the Nineteenth Century from that view-point can hardly realize the tremendous difference in this respect between a hundred or even fifty years ago and now. Then, those who held any opinions at all, "held" them in the literal sense of the word, one might say. They would not let go of them on any account, and so absolutely sure were they of being in the right, that they would brook no contradiction, listen to no argument. It was: "Believe as I do or be damned." This was the case in religion, politics, economics, philosophy, medicine, etc. An antagonist was either a fool or a knave; he could not possibly be anything else; otherwise, how could he differ from us? And this was true not only of the mass of people, of the rabble, but of the thinkers and leaders as well. Exceptions were extremely rare.

What a marvelous change has taken place since! The cocksureness has given way to a kind of uncertainty, hesitation. The questions: "Am I right?" "Am I sure that the thing is so?" flit only too often across the mind of the thinker of the present day, and the thought of the possibility of the other fellow's being in the right and our being in the wrong, prevents us from becoming too arrogantly dogmatic, or too ready to condemn new theories, new ideas which happen to conflict with ours. We repeat what we said at the outset; we consider this one of the most precious possessions of mankind.

But this attitude of mind is a comparatively recent acquisition. It is a reaction against the bigotry and intolerance of former days and, as we have said many times before, all reactions are apt to run to the absurd or dangerous extremes. That's just what has happened to our Tolerance. There is at present a large class of people who are so tolerant as to be utterly intolerable. Those good people will not condemn anything, they will not criticize anything, for fear that the criticized object may after all be in the right, and they in the wrong. No matter how stupid or absurd an idea may be, no matter if a movement may bear the stamp of fraud and quackery on the very face of it, they will not venture any criticism. With a sweet and saintly smile they will say: "Oh! but we must not say anything against it! We have no right. Though the thing looks false, still, perhaps it is true." Bear in mind, they don't say: "We must not condemn before investigating." That would be commendable. But they simply refuse to pronounce any judgment, for fear they may be wrong and do somebody an injustice. We wonder whether these tolerancers know what such an attitude amounts to? In our opinion, it amounts simply to this: That it is absolutely useless to think on any subject whatsoever. What is the use of thinking at all, if we can never know with certainty that we are right, and if the latest conclusions reached by us may be the wrong ones? No, this is not what tolerance means, and this is not what the great thinkers and emancipators meant when they fought against bigotry and taught us to assume a tolerant attitude toward other people's views. Tolerance means an absence of bias, a readiness and willingness to investigate new ideas, a mind free to change and discard old opinions and open to receive new ones. That's all that tolerance means. But if, after a careful and unbiased investigation, our reason—the only instrument of judgment that we possess—tells us that a certain movement is a sheer fraud and hum-

bug; that the ideas it represents are so absurd as to border on insanity; if we find that its leaders mislead, begot, and endanger the lives of the people—then not to criticize and not to expose is clearly to fail in our duty and become guilty of the most culpable negligence.

When a thorough study of the literature, addresses, actions, and doings of the Christian Scientists convinces us that their so-called system is a mixture of fraud, stupidity, and insane delusions; when the chief priestess of the cult—who, while preaching her doctrines, has not forgotten to become enormously rich—tells us, for instance, that she instantly cured a cancer which had eaten into the flesh to a degree that "the angular vein stood out like a cord"; when the literature is found to consist of the most imbecile gibberish, absolutely unintelligible to a rational being; when the reports of their cures prove on examination to be either pure inventions or gross exaggerations (except in cases of functional neuroses); when, in addition to all that, are furiously bent upon making money, and will not distribute any of their comfort or preach any of their truth without a consideration; when we learn that the chief absent-treatment-fakiness—down in Florida, against whom the post office officials had to issue a fraud order—obtained \$200 from a man in New York, under a promise to make his shortened leg two inches longer by thinking of it; when osteopathy, which is nothing but a perfected massage, impudently makes claims as a complete system of medicine, capable of curing the most diverse diseases by external manipulation; when an osteopath claims, for instance, that he can "reduce" typhoid fever (as if it were a dislocation), by pressing upon the seventh cervical vertebra; when we see these mostly illiterate bonesetters knocking at the doors of various legitimate legislatures to be admitted to the practice of medicine without proper educational requirements; when we see that the followers of these cults endanger not only their own lives but also the lives of the community by refusing to take any precautions in the infectious diseases; when, what is still worse, innocent little children are allowed to die in agony without any attempt at relief—a child that sustained an extensive burn, and another one that had diphtheria in a most virulent form, were cruelly prevented from getting medical aid by their Christian Scientist parents, until death freed them from their terrible sufferings—we say, when we see such facts of similar and worse character, then it becomes our duty to assume an unequivocal attitude. We must expose the humbugs and fight the knaves whenever and wherever we can. This must be the attitude of the medical press, of the medical societies as a whole, and of every right-minded physician, as an individual and as a citizen.

H. PERCY WARD TO LECTURE.

Morrison House

Great Bend, Kansas, April 6, 1910

Editor Blue Grass Blade.—I arrived in this country about two months ago and have given a number of lectures in this city under the auspices of the Church of Humanity.

I am now arranging a lecture tour through the principal cities of the United States. My dates and places are as follows:

May 22—Kansas City, Mo.
May 29—St. Louis.
June 5—Chicago.
June 12—Cleveland.
June 19—Pittsburg.
June 26—Washington.
July 3—Philadelphia.
July 10—New York.
July 17—New York.
July 24—Boston.
July 31—Montreal.
Aug. 7—Toronto.
Aug. 14—Buffalo.
Aug. 21—Detroit.

Sincerely yours,
H. PERCY WARD.